

ALBERT GNAWS A THING OR TWO, TOO!









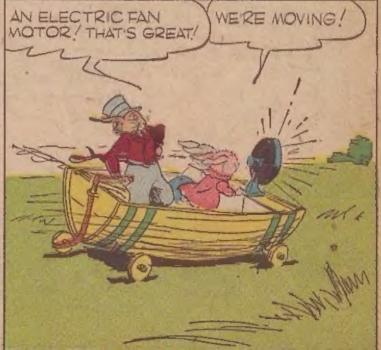












































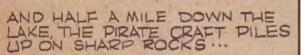






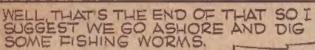














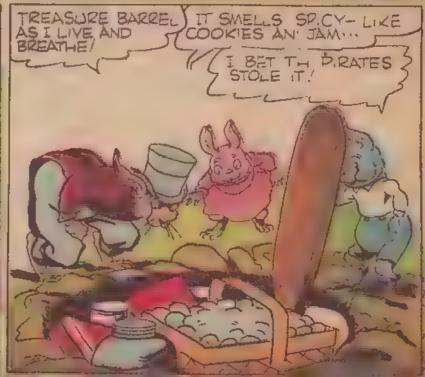
















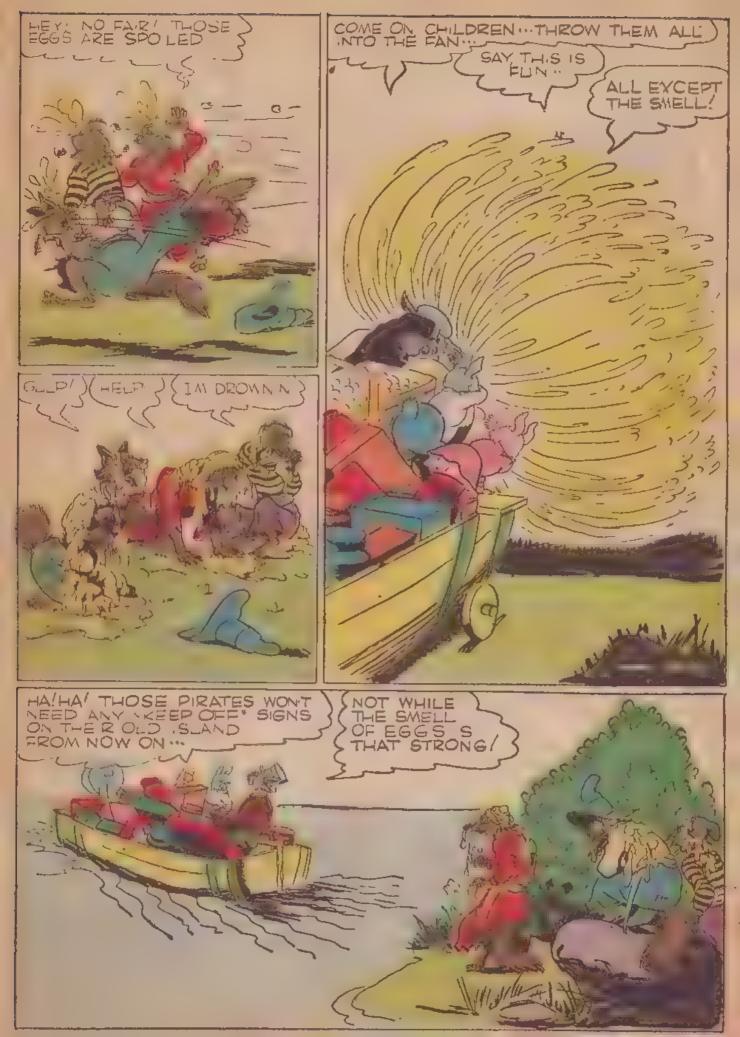










































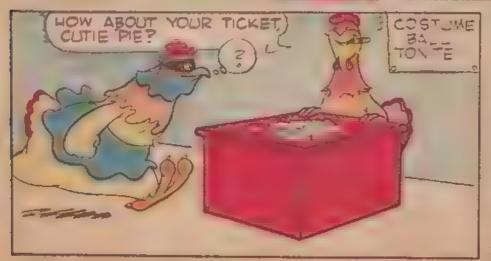










































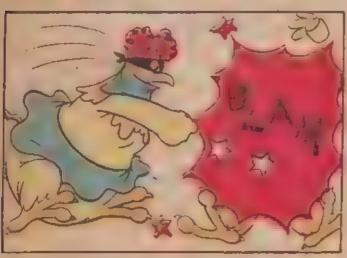








































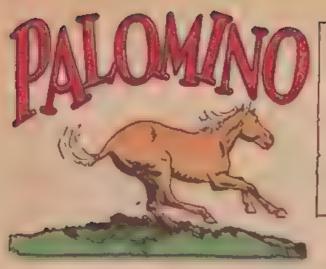


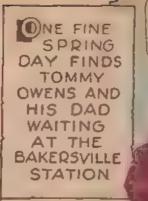




















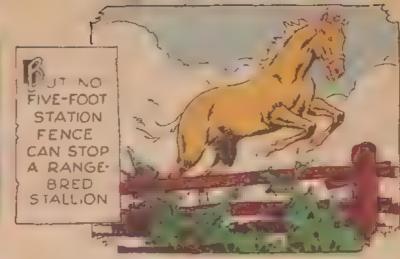


TARLIGHT
NEEDS NO
COAXING:
WITH A
MIGHTY
PLUNGE
HE SNAPS
HIS
LEATHER
HALTER





























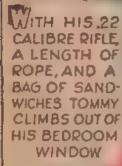
PHAT'NIGHT AFTER HIS, PARENTS ARE ASLEEP, TOMMY OWENS WRITES A SHORT LETTER



I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT MY

PALOMINO, STARLIGHT, 50

I'M NOT COMING BACK TILL







THE WOODS BEGIN

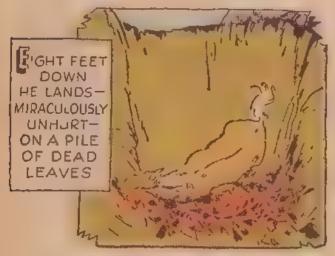




















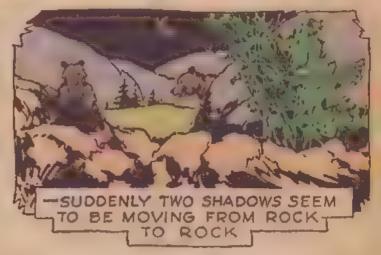


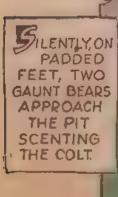
SUSPICIOUS SNIFFS STARLIGHT TAKES A BITE, AND LIKES IT















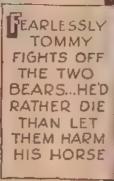








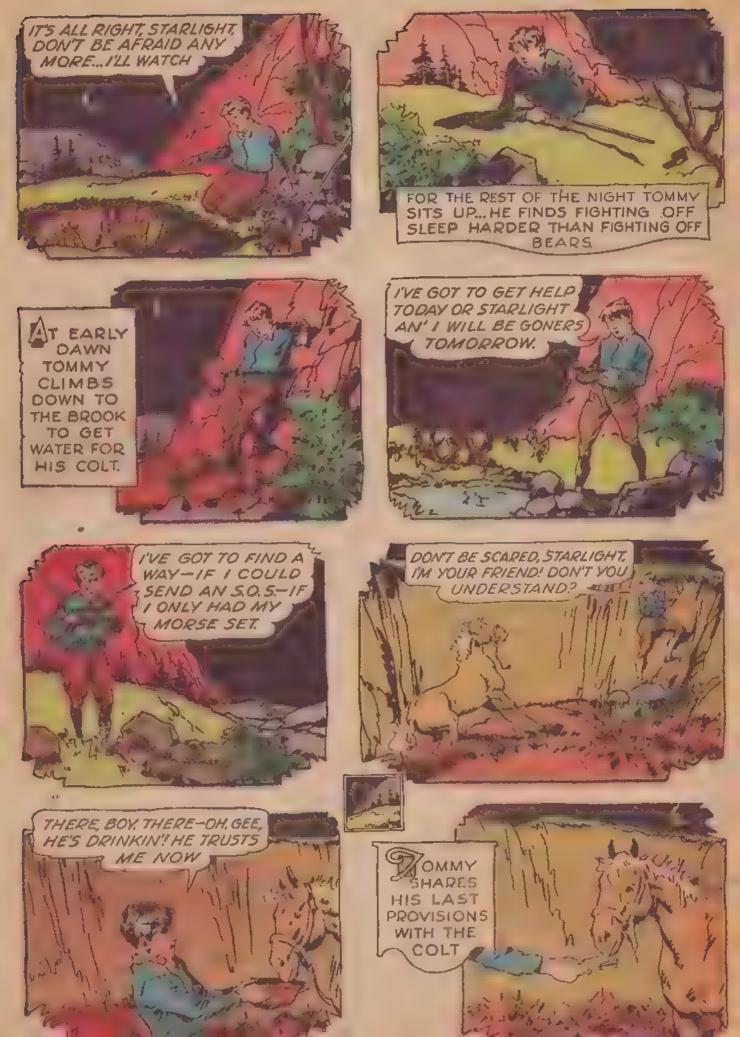














































The little canary sat on the edge of a twig and a tear rolled down his beak and dropped to the ground. He was very unhappy. Here he was, forced to listen to all the other birds singing so beautifully, and he couldn't join in their song. For this little fellow was an orphan in the flock. When the cold breezes of autumn told them it was time to fly south for the winter, all the birds had banded together and set out for this lovely forest, and though there was no one to look after the little canary, he went with them. Though he had no mother or father to teach him the ways of the forest, he followed the flock for many weary days of hard flying until they had reached the forest in which they now dwelt.

Every year the birds practiced and practiced singing until their voices were in perfect condition, for at the end of the season, when it came time to fly north again, they elected their leader by holding a singing contest. Thus it was that the little orphan canary sat on a twig and let his tears fall to the ground, for he knew he would not be able to compete for the prize. Being an orphan he had no one to teach him how to sing. He had gone from family to family asking if someone would give him singing lessons, but each time he was refused for all the other birds were much too busy with their own young to take the time to teach a stranger.

Another tear dropped from the canary's eye, rolled down his beak, and fell to the

ground.

beginning to rain. I'd better be getting along home." And to the amazement of the little bird, there under the bush sat a little man no bigger than a minute. He was all dressed in green, with a little peaked hat, and pointed-toed shoes. As the canary watched him, the little man hopped to his feet and looked up at the sky.

"It can't be raining, the sun's still out." Then he caught sight of the canary on the

bush overhead and stopped.

"Oh ho," he said, putting his finger alongside his nose. "What have we here? A little bird. And a crying bird, at that. Isk, tsk, tsk. That is serious. Come, my little friend. Tell me what troubles you."

Because the little canary felt so badly, he found himself pouring out his troubles. But to his surprise, when he was through, instead of sympathizing with him, the little creature in green laughed merrily.

"Is that all that troubles you? Why, I can fix that in a minute. I myself will teach you to sing." And the little fellow strutted about in the sunshine, flipping his long

green coattails.

"I'm the good elf of the forest. It's my job to keep an eye on things and see that everything runs smoothly. And I can't stand by and have a bird in my forest that doesn't know how to sing, or I'd lose my good reputation."

"But can you really teach me how to

5111g?"

"Well, I can't sing myself, of course, but I can certainly take you to some of my

time to lose if you want to be ready for the contest."

The little canary shook his head. "It's no use," he said. "I've asked every bird in the forest and they are all too busy. No one wants to be bothered with an orphan."

But the little elf just laughed. "Don't you worry. I can see you haven't had much experience in the woods, or you'd know there are plenty of other creatures of the forest who can sing besides the birds."

The canary and his new friend hurried through the dense thicket. Soon they came to a little brook which tripped along over the stones. There they stopped. The little elf put his ear to the edge of the brook and listened for a moment. Then he said,

"Yes, she's in good voice today. Now if you'll just listen carefully, you'll hear the brook's voice, and that's as pretty a song as

you could ask for."

Obligingly the little bird cocked his head and listened real carefully, and sure enough, he could hear the softest sweetest

notes you can imagine.

"Now you try," said the elf. So the little bird opened up his bill and let out a peep. My goodness, but it was a strange sound. He looked sheepishly at the little elf who had put his fingers to his ears, but the elf said,

"Not very good, I'll admit, but all it takes is practice. Come now; try again." To be sure, the second time it was better.

"There now, you see? All you need is just to come here every day and practice, and before you know it you'll be singing

as nicely as the brook."

The elf of the forest was right. Before many days had passed the little canary had learned the technique of singing ripples and trills, and not only that, but he had acquired an audience. For one day, as he stood on the edge of the brook, he saw a tiny figure watching him from under a flower. It was a cricket.

"Howdy, neighbor," said the cricket,

"Mind if I join in a chorus or two?"

"Of course not," said the canary, and promptly the little creature set up a merry chirping by rubbing his hind legs together.

"Why, it sounds just like a fiddle," ex-

claimed the canary.

"Yep, that's right. Lots of folks think I



my hind legs all the time."

So the two sat by the little brook and played and sang until the sun was high in the blue summer sky.

The next day the little elf listened very carefully to the canary. Then he nodded

his head in pleasure.

"It seems to me you've learned all the brook has to teach you. I guess it's time to go on to your next instructor." He led the little bird over to a group of trees. Then lifting up his head, he whistled a weird little tune. In answer a soft summer breeze began to blow through the trees, rustling the leaves, and whispering among the branches.

"There's your next teacher, the Summer Breeze," said the elf. "Just you listen to the song he sings as he blows through the trees, and the first thing you know you'll be singing as softly as he does."

So for many days more the little canary, his cricket friend accompanying him, sat near the trees and listened to the song of the south wind. Then one day the cricket brought his friend the beaver to help them keep time by slapping his tail against the rocks. Finally, when the canary had learned all he could from the south wind, the little elf of the forest said,

"Well, you have one more teacher, then you're through. And if by that time you haven't learned to sing better than any bird in this forest, I'll—I'll—I'll give up my job." He took his friend deep into the forest one dark day, and there they sat

sound of the raindrops as they pattered on the leaves and the ground.

The first thing they knew it was the day of the contest. There was a great to-do among the birds of the forest as they put on their brightest feathers and practiced their scales and trills. Every one was in such good voice the little canary began to wonder if he stood a chance, but his little elfin friend spurred him on, and soon the contest began.

First the bluebird sang, and it was beautiful indeed. The little canary began to worry. Then the meadow lark got up to sing, and he outshone the bluebird. One by one the birds of the forest took their turn, with each one the little canary grow-

ing more and more nervous.

"I don't think I'd better try," he whispered to the elf. "I don't feel very good."

"Nonsense," the elf answered, "It's just stage fright. You'll be all right as soon as

you get started."

Finally it was the canary's turn, but when he stood up to sing before all the assembly he was so frightened his little knees shook and all he could manage were a few nervous squawks. All the other birds began to laugh, for they didn't think the canary had tound anyone to teach him to sing. But just as the little bird was ready to give up without even trying, the little elf of the

forest saw his predicament and hurried off into the woods. In a moment he was back, and with him the cricket and the beaver. The cricket tuned up his fiddle, the beaver slapped his tail with a resounding blow against the ground, and before the little canary had a chance to think about being nervous, they were off, and he was singing with all his might and main.

Well, you never heard such singing in all your life. The other birds were so amazed they could hardly believe their ears. For the little canary sang so beautifully it put all the rest of them to shame. He had indeed learned his lessons well. For his voice had all the ripples and trills of the brook in the forest, and the soft whispers of the south wind blowing through the trees, and the clear sweet notes of the raindrops on the leaves.

Well, I don't have to tell you how the story ends. He was unanimously acclaimed the leader of the flock, and when the time came for them all to return to the north, he sang so beautifully that people watching the flock fly overhead knew that spring was surely on its way.

So that is why, of all the birds, the canary has the sweetest voice of all, for he was taught by the creatures of nature, and if you listen real hard some time you will, hear their voices in his song.







